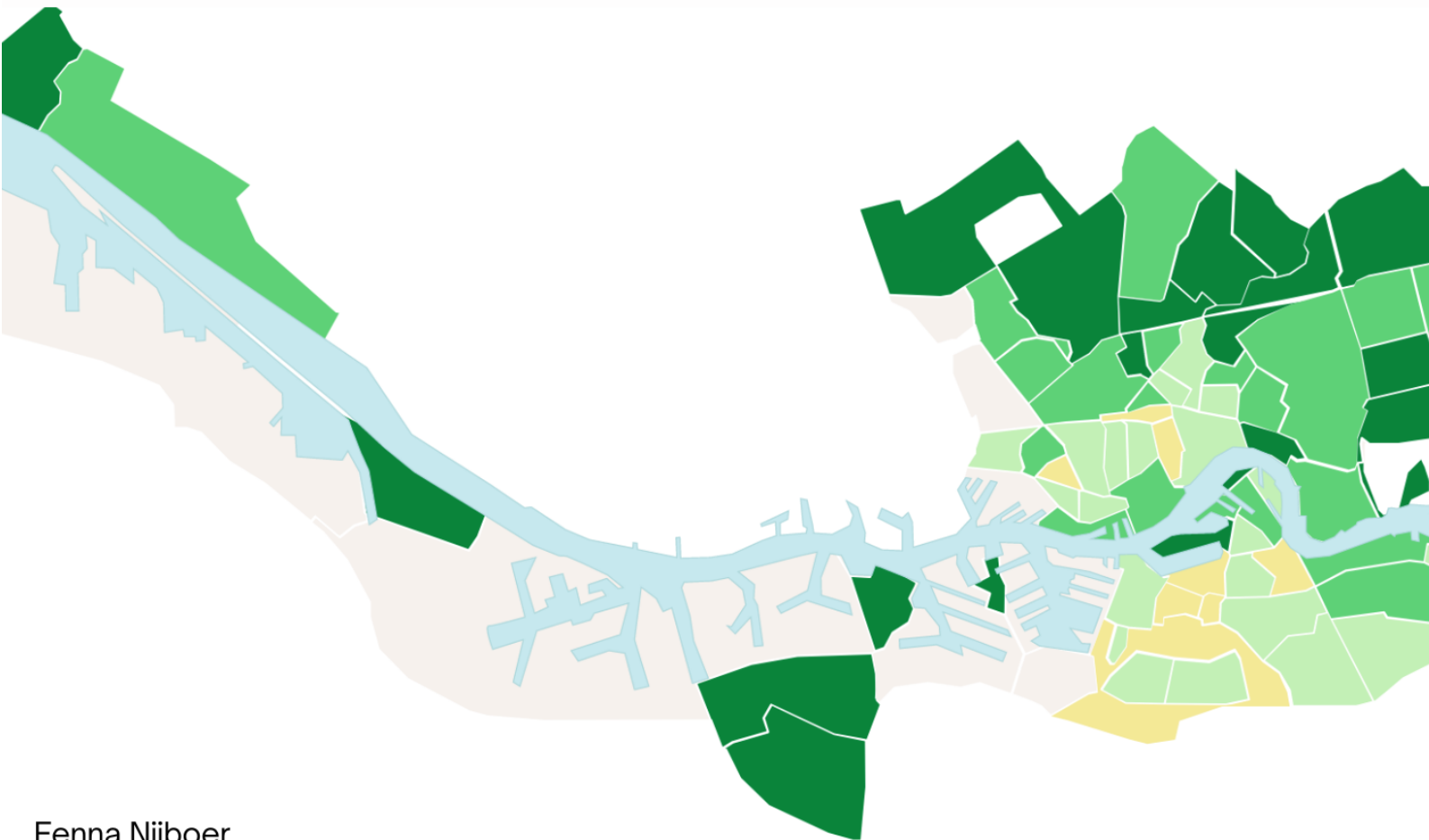


From Rhetoric to Reality

The Publicness of Urban Space in Rotterdam
through the Government of Safety



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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the intricate dynamics of safety governance within Rotterdam's city administration, with a specific focus on public urban spaces. Employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the methodological framework, the study examines how the government of safety articulates the publicness of urban public space and citizenship in Rotterdam. The objective of this thesis is to deconstruct these discourses and connect these to the active role of urban public spaces in shaping the vulnerable positions of particular social groups and their conditional citizenship. The analysis draws upon vision programs pertaining to public urban space, local safety programs, and other policy documents that discuss various safety instruments. The findings reveal an administrative production of space, whereby urban spaces are strategically organized to facilitate the rational management of populations. This dynamic operates within the framework of risk management and governmentality, where the conversion of "weak living environments" into "desirable residential areas" serves to exclude ethnic minority groups and the "underclass" from urban public spaces. Ultimately, this research sheds light on the socio-spatial ramifications of safety discourses, influencing publicness of urban public spaces and materializing differentiated forms of citizenship.

Keywords: urban public space, critical discourse analysis, citizenship, governmentality, safety

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1. Introduction

Safety holds a prominent place within Rotterdam's city administration: "Everyone in Rotterdam must feel safe, both in the streets as well as behind the front door. Man or woman, straight or LGBTQIA+, young or old, or from whatever cultural background regardless" (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022a). This emphasis on safety can be traced back to the turn of the millennium when the city consistently found itself unfavourably ranked on all sorts of "wrong lists", highlighting concerns about its urban environment (De Lange, 2002; Van Ostaaijen & Tops, 2007). As might be expected, the electorate expressed significant interest in addressing crime and safety as the most crucial policy concern (Van Praag, 2003).

Consequently, the new municipal executive board implemented a comprehensive and intensified public safety program, shifting the focus from local crime prevention to overall public safety and "liveability" (Marks, 2007). This marked the inception of various measures, including the deployment of city marines, preventive searches, CCTV monitoring, and increased police presence (Marks, 2007). Notably, these safety measures primarily concentrate on monitoring and regulating within public urban spaces and behaviours considered "risky" (Uitermark & Duyvendack, 2008). The implementation of such has given rise to tensions and contestations surrounding the utilization of urban public spaces in Rotterdam. As Mitchell aptly puts it (1995, p. 115), "public space is the product of competing ideas about what constitutes that space – order and control or free, and perhaps dangerous, interaction – and who constitutes "the" public".

Seemingly, within this framework of a supposedly "safe" city, the existence and behaviour of certain groups is delegitimized or deemed in need of transformation to attain legitimacy (Van Swaaningen, 2005). These intricate dynamics raise profound questions about the criteria for unconditional access to public spaces and objectives and strategies employed

to govern public urban spaces. It is within this context that this research project aims to answer the question: *How does the government of safety articulate the publicness of urban space and citizenship in Rotterdam?* Taken together with the rhetoric and attitudes displayed by Rotterdam's government, this thesis aims to provide a deeper insight into the Rotterdam's imagination as a city through the government of safety. With its status as the poorest and ethnically diverse city in the Netherlands, coupled with its extensive endeavours to address security concerns, Rotterdam emerges as an intriguing case. By analysing public policy and organisational documents, an investigation of dominant discourses and discursive practices of safety will be presented.

In light of the government of safety, numerous scholars have already discussed the use of seemingly objective monitoring measurements like the Safety Index (Veiligheidsindex) (one of the domains of the District Profile (Wijkprofiel) (e.g., Noordegraaf, 2008; Van Eijk, 2010; van Gent et al., 2018; Van Swaaningen, 2005). Noordegraaf (2008) notes how such measurements are employed to transform abstract and subjective notions of safety into well-defined facts and figures, pointing to urban spaces at "risk" (Noordegraaf, 2008). Subsequently, it is discussed how the supposed *raison d'être* and objectivity of measurement tools leads to the justification of the subjugation of certain social groups to safety techniques (Noordegraaf, 2008; Uitermark et al., 2017; Van Gent et al., 2019). To put it differently, the strategies and techniques employed to enhance public safety in, and liveability of urban spaces reflect broader objectives and underlying assumptions regarding the interpretation and achievement of a "safe" city. Van Swaaningen (2005), therefore, argues how the discourse surrounding safety reveals a binary vision between those conforming to societal norms, and those resistant of it. To put it differently, the strategies and techniques employed to enhance public safety in, and liveability of urban spaces reflect broader objectives and underlying

assumptions regarding the interpretation and achievement of a "safe" city. For example, as noted by Uitermark & Duyvendack (2008) articulated issues of unsafety often tend to be associated with deprived communities, particularly ethnic minority groups. Collectively, these studies point to the expansive reach of the government of safety, extending beyond the mere protection of safety into an exclusive politics of public safety.

The unfolding debate on how we make and unmake "safety" in relation to urban public spaces opens another door to scrutinise the legitimacy, temporality, and socio-spatial effects of these discourses. As such, this thesis will attempt building upon these scholarly contributions by deconstructing these discourses and connecting them to the understanding of the active role of urban public space, a perception of what this means for the continuation and making of precarious positions of certain groups and their conditional citizenship. Ultimately, the management of public spaces through the government of safety reflects the city's ambition to shape its identity and establish a tangible embodiment of the desired "Rotterdammer" – someone who can freely navigate the city, without constraints. Scrutinizing this approach to governance illuminates distinct interpretations and conceptions of who constitutes "the public" in Rotterdam.

2. Theoretical framework

This section presents the theoretical dimensions of the research project, presenting discussions on Critical Urban Theory in relation to urban space, urban planning, and public space. Additionally, these discourses will be situated within a framework of governmentality and citizenship.

2.1. Critical Urban Theory

Critical urban theory (CUT) scholars view cities as spaces that consolidate societal power relations of capitalism and other forms of social disempowerment that are inscribed within urban socio-spatial landscapes (Brenner et al., 2012; Marcuse, 2009). CUT understands urban space as an active player in the formation and perpetuation of social identities and meanings imbued with different spatial entities, from the individual body to the larger construct of the nation (Brenner et al., 2012). Massey (2005) similarly argues how space should not be understood as merely the neutral background against which social processes unfold, but as an active and dynamic force that is simultaneously shaped by and constitutive of social relations.

In contemporary urban policy and planning, space is often approached as following one singular trajectory by utilizing practices, strategies, and techniques to realise a specific vision of space (Roy, 2011; Van den Berg, 2012). In this understanding, space becomes intertwined with time, as it is perceived as being at a particular stage within a singular narrative. However, subjecting spaces to the inevitability of a certain “only one narrative” obliterates the multiplicity and heterogeneity of space and occludes the coexistence of other trajectories, histories, and potential different futures (Massey, 2005).

In line with Massey, Roy (2011) approaches *urban planning* as a dual phenomenon, involving both the expertise of designated specialists and the embodiment of power and order aligned with economic and political interests. The production of space and the establishment of social order are influenced by the dissemination of ideas, practices, and ideologies across different temporal and geographical contexts (Jasanoff & Kim, 2005). In this understanding, space has an operational and instrumental role as it inflicts a *planned* social order. Therefore, adopting a CUT perspective enables the exploration of mechanisms that underpin the social and spatial marginalisation and exclusion of specific groups in urban space.

2.2. Public space in capitalist cities

Public space is generally understood as not a given but as continuously changing and as in principle accessible to all and, therefore, profoundly democratic (Bodnar, 2015). *Public space*, then, functions as the material location where the social interactions and political activities of *all* members of “the public” occur. However, public spaces were and are often exclusive and homogenous, comprising only those with power, reputation, and respectability (Fraser, 1990; Hartley 1992). The reality of public space and the public sphere is that it is more an exercise in ideological construction with respect to who belongs to the national community and the relationship of “the people” to formal governance (Mitchell, 1995).

Irrespective of the genesis of any public space, its characterization as *public* results from a continuous discussion between differing viewpoints, one of which champions order and control, while the other advocates for spaces that facilitate unregulated interaction and oppositional political expression (Mitchell, 1995). Therefore, public space is not a neutral concept, but rather a product of competing ideas about what constitutes space and who

constitutes "the public". To this end, the following sub-question will guide this research project: *How is public space approached within the government of safety in Rotterdam?*

2.3. Producing and governing "risk" within urban public spaces

In the realm of current urban policy, significant attention is devoted to identifying potential risks and projecting future scenarios through cause-and-effect analyses (Roy, 2011). Massey's work (2005) suggests that the compression of space into time constructs alternative imaginations of parallel futures associated with "risk" in negative terms, subsuming diversity and multiplicities under a single trajectory that may involve displacement, repression, or disciplinary measures. The concept of *risk*, according to Ewald (1991), is not merely a statistical or empirical concept but a social and discursive category of reason that shapes our understanding and perception of the world and precedes our empirical experience. While risk is managed and regulated to protect the public, risk individualises in a way that categorizes individuals based on to the probability of risk.

This is evident in policymaking and politics characterized by a fear of "incivilities", articulated in ill-defined terms like "urban unrest", "youth" delinquency, and "sensitive" neighbourhoods (Wacquant, 1999). This reflects the *ontology of insecurity* within the political, where it is presumed that things are not secure in and of themselves, to justify the imperative to make things secure (Ahmed, 2004). In turn, this allows for newly spatially oriented practices to public urban space that aim at governing the "risks" that are made visible previously. Within this context, the fear of "incivilities" aligns with neoliberal urban development models that seek to exclude elements that could degenerate urban space, allowing them to be commodified (Smith, 1996).

Under *neoliberal models of urban development*, cities have evolved into significant centres for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods, and their development in terms of social-spatial structure, governance systems, and socio-political dynamics must be understood in this context (Brenner et al., 2012). According to CUT, cities have undergone redevelopment aimed at attracting a wealthier population to urban areas, by promoting a new post-industrial economic framework that prioritizes mass consumption and leisure and accommodates middle classes (Hubbard, 2006; Mair, 1986). Consequently, policymakers and politicians have prioritized the quality and safety of urban public spaces to enhance international competitiveness and capital accumulation within cities (Uitermark & Duyvendack, 2008).

Within Western societies, concerns about the “incivility” are materialized as the growing anxiety among white middle-classes regarding potential encounters with stigmatised "others" such as youth, homeless people, persons with psychiatric disabilities, and Black people, fuelling a desire for insulation from such forms of “otherness” (Valentine, 2001). As Ahmed (2004) explains, narratives of crisis, are often used in politics to justify a “return” to values and traditions perceived to be under threat. “Deviancy”, in this sense, is perceived as a threat, leading to the implementation of policies largely to protect and privilege the lives of the white middle-class in public spaces (Mair, 1986; van Houdt & Schinkel, 2019). Such measures can include the deployment of intensified police force, electronic surveillance, and private security (Valentine, 2001). Accordingly, various scholars point to the decline in publicness of public space (Mitchell, 1995; Sibley, 1988).

2.4. Gentrification and the intersection of class, race, and ethnicity

Gentrification involves urban renewal projects that privatize and commodify public spaces to cater to wealthy middle classes (Smith, 1992). This process leads to the displacement of lower-income residents by those with higher income and socioeconomic standing through the restructuring of property values, fostering opportunities for the construction industry and an increase in private homeownership (Rose, 1984). These changes in the social composition of neighbourhoods and rising property prices are often accompanied by shifts in the retail service landscape, catering to the needs and preferences of the gentrifying population (Van Den Berg, 2021). Politicians and policymakers view *state-led gentrification* as a positive urban policy for enhancing cohesion and liveability, which involves appropriation of gentrification to describe the objectives and strategies for mixing housing and residents (Uitermark et al., 2007).

Gentrification gives rise to a distinct urban middle class that distinguishes itself from other segments of the middle class in suburban or ex-urban areas, as well as from the previous urban inhabitants and the contemporary working-class or underclass (Smith, 1992). However, the experience of space is shaped by various factors beyond capital activities (Massey, 2005), as meanings attributed to spaces are situated at specific positions on the axes of ethnicity, race, and class (Wacquant, 2008). Atkinson and Bridge (2005) emphasise the colonial character of gentrification and how the privilege of whiteness is related to more class-based identities and preferences in urban living. Ethnicity is frequently associated with urban poverty and the experience of being impoverished in urban areas (Uitermark & Duyvendak, 2008). Gentrification is thus inherently intertwined with racialized spaces, as neighbourhoods are fundamentally shaped by their racial demographics, although not all gentrifying neighbourhoods undergo racial change (Rucks-Ahidiana, 2022).

To explain, in the European context, ethnic minorities are largely (offspring of) relatively recent immigrants, opening the argument that they are “not *yet* integrated” (Uitermark & Duyvendak, 2008). As such, there is a *civilizing offensive* in which the urban poor are integrated and incorporated by “educating” and “disciplining” them by using the concept of culture, which encompasses a range of values and norms that may vary in compatibility with the dominant culture. As such, van Eijk (2010) argues that exclusionary policies are intrinsically linked to concerns for national unity and social order.

Consequently, the experience of living and understanding public spaces undergoes a shift through such urban redevelopment, as particular forms of property development assert who can claim space and rights in the city, and shape everyday practices of citizenship and attachment to place. Therefore, urban governments’ strategies are motivated not only by economic interests but also by conceptualizations of how cities (and nations) ought to progress (Mitchell, 2003), or more specifically, how they should *not* progress.

2.5. Governmentality

Spatial planning and representations of the city can thus be seen as not solely the expression of capitalist (re)production but also as instrumental in the rational management of populations. Such a mode of governing relates to Foucault’s understanding of governmentality. *Governmentality* refers to “the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security” (Foucault, 1991, p. 102). According to governmentality theorists, risk is not an independent entity but rather a rationality employed in governance. This

perspective argues that risk operates within intricate power systems that shape and influence the behaviour of individuals, groups, and populations (Ewald, 1991). Put differently, through governmentality, the control of populations is exercised through various and diverse techniques (Oksala, 2013). The techniques used in securitization serve to reinforce the idea that individuals can be controlled and manipulated in predictable ways, while reinforcing the idea of the "normal" as a desirable goal.

2.5.1. Governing through exceptionalism

Consequently, certain people and their conduct in urban spaces are categorised according to assumed expert knowledge, resulting in their exclusion from public spaces or even categorization as "illegal." Arguably, this mode of governing can be explained as the *governing through exceptionalism*, which involves the exceptional as a central feature (van Houdt & Schinkel, 2019). As Agamben (1998) explains, the state of exception results in a restructuring of governance into a *biopolitical apparatus* where individuals are positioned outside their political and legal rights and are governed as *bare life* rather than as citizens. This concept, exemplified by Foucault (Oksala, 2013), is based on biopower's rationale that prioritises the norm over the juridical system. In that sense, citizenship extends *formal citizenship*, which is the legal status of citizens and their membership in certain social rights and obligations, into *moral citizenship*, which is a normative conception of what the ideal citizen should be (Schinkel, 2010). In other words, citizenship can be perceived as a contract between the state and the (conditional) citizen, with specific economic, moral, and cultural responsibilities.

2.5.2. Calibrations of citizenship: economic rationality and national identity

Arnold (2004) suggests that contemporary citizenship is moulded within the frameworks of economic self-sufficiency and national identity. Normative standards linked to

economic, gender, and racial status shape national identity, creating a sense of belonging for some while disenfranchising others (Arnold, 2004). In other words, citizenship encompasses exclusion, inclusion, political identity, and territorial belonging. Wekker (2016) argues that belonging to Dutch society requires shedding non-Dutch traits and assimilating, as the Dutch conception of society emphasises similarity, mono-ethnicism, and mono-culturalism – for example, memories of oppression, non-Christian beliefs, and being non-white.

As argued by Foucault, economic rationality dominates human action (Oksala, 2013). This principle is grounded in (neo)liberalism, which has informed the way biopolitical rationality in Western societies is enacted and assumed (Oksala, 2013). That is, traditionally non-economic domains are translated and evaluated in economic terms by understanding economic analysis and statistics as scientific truths about social life. Biopolitical techniques rely on administrative policies, tactics, and strategies to regulate populations rather than on the law, and expert knowledge is used to legitimise these practices instead of parliamentary decisions (Oksala, 2013).

Neoliberalism, in effect, can be viewed as a mechanism for population management that requires citizens to assume responsibility in order to be granted the rights and privileges of citizenship (van Houdt et al., 2011). Ultimately, these differing levels of power and authority and granted (degrees of) citizenship result in a certain antagonism between the legitimate citizen and the non-citizen/conditional citizen.

Put differently, the moralization of citizenship has contributed to problematizing formal citizens, upon which they are exposed to discursive subjugation and deprived of their citizenship within public urban spaces. While public urban space inherently involves social struggle, it can also be treated as a formal object through planning processes (Roy, 2011). Experts utilize signs and symbols to exert control and order over space, using public space as

a means to reform and educate citizens and regulate their behaviour. Consequently, the very public nature of public space becomes constrained (Berney, 2011). At its minimum, exclusion signifies an individual's subordination to a normalizing process, while at its worst, it entails arrests, harassment, and disrespect based on economic and other differences that shape identity. If citizenship were to be universal, disregarding national borders, the stark division between those with and without citizenship would be rare rather than commonplace.

To understand how discursive practices of safety translate into the restricted movement and existence of certain individuals and groups, the analysis will be guided by the following sub-question: *In what ways do discursive practices of safety constrain the public movement and conduct of certain individuals and groups with respect to the socio-spatial intersections of class and ethnicity/race?* By addressing this question, the investigation seeks to ascertain who precisely constitutes "the public" and in what manner(s). Ultimately, this research can be situated within the framework of governmentality by examining the diverse styles of governing, its underlying political rationalities, as well as the practices and techniques employed in these governance processes.

3. Research design

Since this research project has aimed to set out how the urban planning within Rotterdam engages with safety and which implications this holds for the publicness of urban space and notions of citizenship, a research design that allows for an in-depth, detailed analysis was required. Therefore, a qualitative research method was chosen due to its potential for exploring the intricate mechanisms involved in the construction of meaning through discursive practices, and to investigate how these practices manifest and are situated within specific historical, political, and cultural discourses (Brennen, 2017). Moreover, a qualitative approach recognizes the role of language in the construction of reality (Flick, 2007), allowing for an understanding on how the government of safety is materialized through discursive linguistic strategies.

3.1. Critical Discourse Approach

To gain better insight into how language functions as a social practice that plays a significant role in legitimizing, perpetuating, and normalizing various forms of social power and inequality, a critical discourse approach (CDA) was adopted. CDA, as a qualitative research approach, offers a framework through which a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon can be achieved from a critical theory perspective. Scholars such as Fairclough (1995), Wodak and Meyer (2001), and van Dijk (2001) have contributed to the development of CDA as a diverse and multifaceted research paradigm, encompassing various critical and methodological approaches. Hence, it is important to note that CDA should be viewed as a *research approach* instead of as a specific method for analysis (Van Dijk, 2001).

Generally speaking, CDA endeavours to elucidate and engage in critical discussions of discursive practices that involve the creation of meaning and the subsequent political,

cultural, and social implications for society (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Discursive practices, understood as discourse in action, have ideological consequences as they generate and perpetuate unequal power dynamics among different social groups (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). CDA frequently focuses on the analysis of texts generated by individuals or entities occupying positions of power, like governmental institutions (Bouvier & Machin, 2018). Therefore, CDA proved to be a suitable approach for dissecting how calibrations of citizenship are discursively constructed through discourses of safety that position individuals and groups (i.e., subjects) differentially in relation to one another and the context of urban public space.

3.2. Analytical procedure

As mentioned, as a multifaceted research paradigm, CDA does not offer one specific method of analysis. Therefore, the framework presented by Mullet (2018) aims to bring together the commonly shared principles and characteristics in an analytical framework for CDA. These principles include a problem-oriented emphasis, a focus on language, the understanding that power relations are constructed through discourse, the recognition that discourses are shaped by specific contexts, the acknowledgement that language expressions are inherently biased, and the utilisation of a systematic, interpretive, descriptive, and explanatory analytical process (Mullet, 2018). Accordingly, this framework was adopted to guide the analytical procedure of this research project.

Firstly, a discourse related to social injustice or inequality was selected, which denotes the research aim of this research: *how discourses of safety articulate the publicness of urban space and citizenship in Rotterdam*. Data sources were then collected and prepared for analysis, which will be detailed in Section 3.2. Next, the social and historical context of the

texts was explored, including the producers and purpose of the text. In stage 4, the major themes and subthemes using qualitative coding techniques are identified. The collected data will be uploaded to Atlas.ti, in which the coding procedure will be done (see Appendix B for screenshots of the coding procedure).

For this part, the model from Corbin and Strauss' (1990) of open, axial, and selective coding was used for classifying and coding the data into key themes and patterns. *Open coding* involved breaking down data into "conceptually similar events/actions/interactions" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p.12), which were subsequently classified into broad subcategories: the *axial codes*. the feasibility of this, half of the sample was open coded as this provided a sufficient idea of which codes emerged. During *axial coding*, the other half of the sample was be coded by using the codes derived in the previous stage. Lastly, *selective coding* involved the clustering of categories that captures the essential themes identified in constant oscillation with theory.

For the next step, the interaction between different discourses within specific texts were considered, following by an analysis of linguistic devices and discursive strategies representing power relations, social context, or positionalities of the producers. This included aspects like vocabulary and illocutionary forces of utterances. Finally, the data was interpreted through the themes and relations identified in earlier stages. The integration of the coding strategy and Mullet's framework is visualized in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Integration of CDA Framework and coding procedure (Mullet 2018; Corbin & Straus..)

3	<p>Background of each text</p> <p>Examine the social and historical context and producers of the</p>					
4	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 470 724 745"> <p>Open coding</p> <p>First half of the sample Breaking down data into conceptually similar events/actions/interactions Initial classification of a specific segment of a</p> </td> <td data-bbox="724 470 1225 745"> <p>Axial coding</p> <p>Second half of the sample The categories and subcategories are interconnected to draw links between the open codes and group them into broader categories</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="304 745 1225 1003"> <p>Selective coding</p> <p>The grouping of categories into "core" categories to describe key phenomena and how they relate to relevant theory, or to generate new theoretical insights Code entire sample with this generated coding scheme</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Open coding</p> <p>First half of the sample Breaking down data into conceptually similar events/actions/interactions Initial classification of a specific segment of a</p>	<p>Axial coding</p> <p>Second half of the sample The categories and subcategories are interconnected to draw links between the open codes and group them into broader categories</p>	<p>Selective coding</p> <p>The grouping of categories into "core" categories to describe key phenomena and how they relate to relevant theory, or to generate new theoretical insights Code entire sample with this generated coding scheme</p>		Coding of single texts
<p>Open coding</p> <p>First half of the sample Breaking down data into conceptually similar events/actions/interactions Initial classification of a specific segment of a</p>	<p>Axial coding</p> <p>Second half of the sample The categories and subcategories are interconnected to draw links between the open codes and group them into broader categories</p>					
<p>Selective coding</p> <p>The grouping of categories into "core" categories to describe key phenomena and how they relate to relevant theory, or to generate new theoretical insights Code entire sample with this generated coding scheme</p>						
6	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 1003 1225 1355"> <p>External relations</p> <p><i>Interdiscursivity</i></p> <p>Identification of interactions among different themes/discourses within texts Identification of ideological position Speaker's affiliation with his/her/their statement Similarities and differences in discourses</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 1355 1225 1675"> <p>Internal relations</p> <p><i>Linguistic features</i></p> <p>text structures, rhetorical moves, metaphors, patterns relating to theme; grammar, word choice, tone and constructions connected to theme; active or passive voice Locations in the text Context</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>External relations</p> <p><i>Interdiscursivity</i></p> <p>Identification of interactions among different themes/discourses within texts Identification of ideological position Speaker's affiliation with his/her/their statement Similarities and differences in discourses</p>	<p>Internal relations</p> <p><i>Linguistic features</i></p> <p>text structures, rhetorical moves, metaphors, patterns relating to theme; grammar, word choice, tone and constructions connected to theme; active or passive voice Locations in the text Context</p>	Analysis of single texts		
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7	<p>Interpret data</p> <p>Interpreting meanings of major themes, external relations, internal relations in relation to social and historical context and</p>	Oscillation between single texts and broader discursive structure				

3.2.1. Data Collection and Sampling

To collect data that demonstrates how the government of safety is approached, open-access, public policy documents will be analysed. Although there is no universally accepted standard for data collection in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Wodak & Meyer, 2001), the selected data corpus aims to encompass a range of documents with diverse purposes. This includes long-term vision documents focusing on urban public space and the urban environment in Rotterdam. The 5-year Safety Program was also included, which outlines the approach to safety derived from the coalition agreement 2018-2022, which therefore also included. As these documents deploy information from the District Profile, documents that explain the Profile and evaluate its outcome were also incorporated. Additionally, various letters to the council from the municipal executive board were included as they provided context and evaluation of specific practices of safety. Finally, the General Local Bylaw (APV), which outlines municipal rules concerning public safety and order, was part of the data collection. Altogether, by including long-term vision documents, practical safety-related documents, and contextualizing materials, this diverse collection of documents ensured saturation and an appropriate sample to how discourses emerged. The selection prioritised the most recent available documents in each category, spanning from 2012 to 2023, in order to reflect current policies, programs, measurements, and information in effect. A comprehensive overview of the collected data can be found in Appendix A.

Given the focus on Rotterdam, collected data is primarily in Dutch. To ensure broader accessibility and understanding, the coding process will be conducted in English. Using English as the coding language establishes clear connections between concepts and facilitates the analytical process. Attention will be given to the nuances of the Dutch language, contextualizing translations within the Dutch linguistic landscape. This preserves the original

text's integrity, recognizing that literal translations may overlook important subtleties and fail to capture the full essence of the discourse.

3.1.3. Operationalization

The analytical procedure of this project involves an operationalization of the concepts within the research question as well as in the theoretical framework in which this research is situated. These operationalizations must be understood as *sensitizing* descriptions, instead as rigid definitions.

Discourses

May be perceived as systems of thought that comprise ideas, attitudes, beliefs, practices, and courses of action, which systematically constitute the subjects and worlds they articulate. They are a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of action and are socially constituted and socially constitutive. They are linked to argumentation about validity claims, such as truth and normative validity involving several social actors with different points of views. It constitutes the framework within which discursive practices operate.

Discursive practices

Pertains to the practices, operations, and specific manifestations of discourses. The emphasis is on *how* knowledge is generated through various plural and contingent practices across various sites. They involve the concrete use of language, the production of statements, and the deployment of specific discursive strategies and techniques.

Governmentality

The art of governing, to be understood as the mentality within a governmental discourse by which citizens are made governable. Its analysis uses the genealogy of power-knowledge and combines it with political rationalities and problematizations of social phenomena and subjects, and as its fundamental technological tools, security apparatuses.

Strategies

encompass abstract theories or frameworks of governance that involve the relationships between the state, market, society, and citizens, for example.

Political programs

drive action through the process of problematization and the establishment of goals or objectives. They define a range of issues and practical targets for intervention, thereby enabling more specific and tangible intervention techniques.

Techniques

refer to concrete methods of intervention aimed at population management.

Neoliberalism/economic rationality

Neoliberal policies apply economic analysis to domains that were previously juxtaposed with the economy; neoliberalism ensures that these social phenomena must operate according to market forces by placing them in an economic discourse.

Ontology of insecurity

Risk is a rationality of governing the uncertain that affects the ways in which individuals and collectives live, organize themselves, and exercise power.

Citizenship

From a governmentality perspective, citizenship is mechanism governed by the state for the purpose of inclusion and exclusion which plays a pivotal role in managing populations at both the national and international levels. Here, a distinction is made between formal and moral citizenship, which relates to the varying importance attributed to citizenship in its formal sense (juridical status) compared to moralized conceptions of the "good" or "active" citizen (extra-juridical, normative concept).

3.5. Reliability and validity

To ensure that the process of inquiry actively attains reliability and validity, certain strategies for establishing rigor are built into the qualitative research process. The researcher

systematically checks the data, maintains focus, and constantly monitors the fit of data with the conceptual work of analysis and interpretation. This entails the objective of *methodological coherence*, which involves the matching between the research question and the data and analytical procedure (Morse et al., 2002). Due to the adaptable nature of qualitative research, it is essential to adopt an iterative approach during the sampling (Flick, 2007). Following an abductive approach, a constant oscillation between the theory and data will be used to collect the data (Rau et al., 2018). This entails the moving back and forth between the micro perspective of the data and the macro theoretical understanding, also defined as *theory development* by Morse et al. (2002).

3.6. Ethical considerations

As this research project is engaged in critical analysis, this qualitative research actively avoids claims to objectivity. Van Dijk (2001) explains that “CDA does not deny but explicitly defines and defends its own socio-political position” (p. 96). So, it is made explicit that the interpretations of the analysis are guided by critical urban theory. Moreover, the purpose of the study is explicitly disclosed in the introduction section of this project.

Additionally, the agency of the individual within the broader, structural dynamics that shape the social world of the researcher plays a crucial role in the production of knowledge. As a 22-year-old white woman studying sociology with a background in communication and media, my academic background and inherent biases and privileges may manifest through the way I interpreted the data. My lived experiences as resident in Rotterdam for 4 years might influence the way I navigated through the context of the city concerning the research topic. Though, providing a comprehensive depiction of one’s biases as a researcher to account for this positionality risks making claims to an objective truth and ignores how knowledge is

situated within a social-cultural context (Rose, 1997; Foucault, 1998). Finally, in Appendix C, the documentation of ethics and privacy implications and safeguards is provided.

4. Results

The subsequent section will present the results of applying Mullet's (2018) five-stages framework to the selected corpus of data. The selected codes that emerged were grouped in inter-related discourse topics and will be discussed along with the prominent discursive strategies employed and socio-political context. Respectively, these themes concern 1) *public space as "inclusive", "accessible", and "collaborative"*, 2) *public space as an object of governance*, 3) *discursive practices of safety*, and 4) *making space for a desirable Rotterdam*.

4.1. Public space as "accessible", "inclusive", and "collaborative"

As suggested by (Mitchell, 1995), discourses of public spaces play a significant role in shaping the concept of "the public" and the nature of public space itself. These discourses involve debates about who has the right to occupy public space and *how* and *if* it should be governed. By analysing the discursive construction of public space in Rotterdam through the available data, insights emerged regarding the positioning within these ongoing debates. To begin with, in the *Vision for Public Space Rotterdam* the inclusive nature of public space is repeatedly emphasized, asserting that Rotterdam must provide "a welcoming and socially accessible public space where everyone feels welcome and safe" (Gemeente Rotterdam Stadsontwikkeling, 2020, p. 20). Special attention is given to the diversity of groups in Rotterdam: "The city's "super-diversity" demands an inclusive, accessible public space where everyone, from 0 to 100, has a place" (Rotterdam Stadsontwikkeling, 2020, p. 20). "The inclusive city" is also presented as fundamental theme in the *Rotterdam Environmental Vision* (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021), a document providing guidance on how the city will address its "foreseeable" challenges (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.-b). By relating to Rotterdam's diverse composition, values of belonging and safety that members of *both*

majority and minority communities can relate to are discursively attributed to the vision of Rotterdam's urban public space.

Additionally, Rotterdammers are actively engaged through diverse consultation methods to capture their input. Firstly, the *District Profile* incorporates survey questions that ask for opinions, ratings, and satisfaction levels of residents to gauge subjective scores of safety and liveability. The District Profile is composed of the *Safety Index*, *Social Index*, and *Physical index* (see Figure 1) (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022b). Together with “objective scores” derived from factual data from various registration (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022b), the District Profile is perceived as the “thermometer for the city” and “compass” for urban planning and governance (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022c, p. 8). The Directorate of Safety (*Directie Veiligheid*), a municipal body responsible for ensuring an attractive and safe city residents, visitors, and businesses (Lokale wet- en regelgeving, 2015), has translated the outcomes of specifically the Safety Index into a Safety Program: *Veilig@Rotterdam*.

The analysis of the Safety Program showed recurrent references to discursive spaces where citizens can exchange ideas, opinions, and knowledge, and engage in dialogue with the city administration. For example, as articulated in the evaluation of the Safety Program, “several times a year, the Safe in the District Steering Committee speaks with residents and business owners about what they think about safety in their districts” (Burgemeester en Wethouders van Rotterdam, 2021, p. 2). Residents are thus approached as deliverers of information for the government of safety.

Figure 1

Domains of the District Profile and corresponding indicators (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022)

Fysiek (FI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woonbeleving • Wonen • Openbare ruimte • Voorzieningen • Milieu
Veiligheid (VI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veiligheidsbeleving • Diefstal • Geweld • Inbraak • Vandalisme • Overlast
Sociaal (SI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beleving kwaliteit van leven • Zelfredzaamheid • Samenredzaamheid • Participatie • Binding

Moreover, the municipality's utterances discursively construct Rotterdammers as actively involved in the *organization* of urban spaces. For example, "Rotterdammers are the "eyes and ears" of the neighbourhood. They want to participate and roll up their sleeves. Rotterdammers do not undergo the future. They want to shape the future of the city together" (Directie Veiligheid, 2018, p. 8). Notably, this participation is also articulated as integral for a safe city: "By challenging them to actively contribute and facilitating them where possible, the influence that Rotterdammers have on the safety and liveability of their own living environment increases" (Directie Veiligheid, 2018, p. 15). The municipal executive board replicates this discursive qualification of Rotterdammer's involvement as valuable by articulating the wish to intensify involvement of Rotterdammers: "In the near future the board wishes to further increase the influence of Rotterdammers in their districts and the involvement in the neighbourhood (Burgemeester en Wethouders van Rotterdam, 2021, p. 3).

Thus, active participation is not only constructed as a characteristic of Rotterdammers, but it is also actively encouraged: “We invite people to make their voice heard and engage with each other” (Directie Veiligheid, 2018, p. 8).

The articulated vision of public space as inclusive, open for free interaction, accessible and safe for everyone, according to Mitchell (1995), underscores a vision where social groups can assert their presence in the public realm, allowing themselves to become part of the public. Moreover, the formulation of safety plans in Rotterdam seem to reflect the preferences of the “Rotterdammers” with the aim of creating a safer and more liveable city. Together with facilitating opportunities for citizen participation, a *co-constitutive* relationship between citizens and the government in claiming public space is suggested. Collectively, these discursive elements suggest an understanding of urban public space as shaped by social relations and democratic processes, allowing for multiple trajectories to develop.

4.2. Public space as an object of governance

Nevertheless, an argument can be made that a discrepancy exists between the rhetoric surrounding the creation of open and collaboratively constructed urban public spaces and the actual implementation and realization of these envisioned ideals, particularly in terms of co-creating urban public spaces and developing collaborative strategies. Markedly, the articulated desire for unrestricted utilization and inclusive accessibility of public urban spaces suggests the need for governing to realise this vision. This is manifested in two ways: firstly, through qualitative narratives that envision a desired future state and, secondly, through the likelihood assessment of future scenarios employing statistical methodologies. Within these discursive practices, safety appears as an essential prerequisite for constructing desirable

public urban spaces, as hinted in the Safety Program’s foreword: “Safety is the breeding ground for a thriving city” (Directie Veiligheid, 2018, p. 4).

4.2.1. Envisioning the future

The future of Rotterdam is imagined through qualitative narratives, aligning it with expectations. These narratives serve as representations of unfolding “action”, or events that occur in the world, and facilitate their organisation and structuring into a coherent storyline. The Environmental Vision (*Omgevingsvisie*) document titled *The City of Change. Working towards a global city for all*. devotes an entire chapter to the “story of Rotterdam”, because

if you know who you are and where you stand, you can also better determine who you want to be in the future. In this chapter, we take you through the story of Rotterdam. From the mosaic of villages, industrialization and immigration to the metropolis and challenges the city faces today. (Gemeenteraad, 2021, p. 17).

Throughout these historical narratives, a recurring theme emerges: Rotterdam is known as the city of action, characterised by a pioneering mindset and receptive to renewal, innovation, and experimentation. Arguably, this creates a legitimate basis for interventions aimed at “creating” the desired future of the city because it frames these values and characteristics as “typical” for Rotterdam and its identity. As noted by Jasanoff and Kim (2015), the past serves as a prologue, providing a foundation for the present, but it is also a reservoir of memories that is excavated and reinterpreted in the context of society's current understanding and aspirations for the future.

So, within its subsequent chapters, such as in Chapter 3 “trends, challenges and transitions” (Gemeenteraad, 2021, p. 32), shared understandings and practices based on a

perception of reality and how the world ought to operate are presented. By implicitly bridging realms of knowledge and value, objectivity and subjectivity, these narratives provide interpretations of what is meant by the concept of risk and its manifestations. For example, the document highlights major developments such as “migration to the city, ageing population, energy transition, climate change, digitalization and the rise of the network society” that impact the city and cause changes (Gemeenteraad, 2021, p. 2). In like manner, urban public space is discussed:

In addition, downtown is experiencing increasing pressure on public space. Consider the increase in travel by more and more people (residents, workers, and visitors). The space needed for organised activities, but also to take a break. (...) This requires more and better designed public space for intensive use and therefore also intensive management and maintenance. Choices and investments in the public domain are therefore necessary to give transitions sufficient space and to add quality to the living environment (Gemeenteraad, 2021, p. 135).

These constructed phenomena as “risky” – as points of action – lead to a recurring emphasis on the ongoing need for development, investments, and interventions. As the title of the Environmental Vision document also suggests, infinitive clauses like “keep investing”, “creating”, “making”, and “working” are employed, indicating intended and desired actions. These articulated directions of action and intervention address the practical articulation of risk, for example: “We designate these neighbourhoods as focus neighbourhoods for urban renewal” (Gemeenteraad, 2021, p. 95). It is implicit that conceptions of desired futures are intrinsically linked to shared concerns regarding potential risks and drawbacks associated with the lack of innovation and intervention. They serve as publicly performed visions that

animate shared understandings of social life and order attainable through administrative governing or urban spaces.

4.2.2. Making “risk” and “fixing” the future

Secondly, through monitoring and measuring, urban reality is rendered “readable” by producing *images* of social life and urban reality within a discursive framework of “risk”. To explain, the state of urban space is measured through tools like the Safety Index, where scores below 100 (Rotterdam’s zero measurement) indicate districts requiring attention and scores above highlighting relatively strong aspects of districts (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022b). By imposing a “frame” on urban reality through evaluative scores or colours (see Figure 2), it becomes possible to identify spaces deemed risky compared to the normative average represented by the *zero measurement* (100) in Rotterdam. This division of space into districts reflects an objectifying approach that renders the city visible under the light of “risk”, spatially locating “vulnerabilities” to risk.

Through such risk assessments, the present evaluation serves as a pivotal moment of decision-making that freezes time and allows for the disruption of the line of expectations that is suggested by this vulnerability. This line of expectation points to undesirable futures and, therefore, requires intervention, which thus functions as a method of exerting control over the progression of time, effectively “disciplining” the future, as asserted by Ewald (1991). Such image-making practices abstract space and reduces it to a set of isolable and interconnected properties, serving as a mode of conveying information about the nature of the city of Rotterdam.

Figure 2

The map of Rotterdam with Safety Index scores in 2022 per district, (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022b)



Note. The index scores use colours to give insight into how each district scores compared to the Rotterdam average: green scores equal or above the Rotterdam average, yellow means a score below or far below the Rotterdam average.

By interpreting the concept of risk informed by statistical measurements in combination with a narrative articulation of what is happening in the world, populations at risk are spatially identified and an imagination of urban public space is established. The city administration in that sense constructs stories of progress in their programmatic statements (i.e., vision documents) and blends these into the practice of expectation (i.e., the District Profile and its integrated indices). This practice of expectation and risk assessment plays a crucial role in the governance of urban policies, as it justifies present actions in light of an envisioned future that is not yet realised. In this respect, the knowledge of risk operates between a frozen past (represented by the average score in the “zero measurement”) and a fixed future. From a governmentality perspective, this constructed “image of the city” serves

as an instrumental tool for the rational management of populations, allowing for the strategic organisation and control of urban public spaces.

As mentioned by Mitchell (1999), arguments on behalf of the thesis of the end of public space suggests that an orderly, controlled vision of public space in the city is squeezing out other ways of imagining public spaces. Arguably, through the discursive framing of involving Rotterdammers in policy discourses, a semblance of participation is suggested, thereby lending policy decisions a sense of legitimacy by suggesting that residents have a substantial role in shaping the proposed image of the city. Therefore, arguably, this analysis reveals that the utterances about public space reflect an ideological position: public space is defined as a *place of order* and, therefore, an *object of governance*. The government of safety thus assumes a strategic role in the discursive imagination of the city that continues to inform Rotterdam's urban planning, and therefore, its public spaces.

4.3. Discursive practices of safety

According to Jasanoff and Kim (2015), the process of defining and understanding the order within social life (i.e., an imaginary) is closely tied to a commitment to maintaining that order. The performative nature of imaginaries is linked to practical political action, as social actors and institutions respond to events that challenge the established order. Within the domain of safety, techniques for managing public spaces are enabled through the characterizations of risk. As such, discursive practices of safety provide a fertile ground for exploring the practical, concrete manifestations of imaginaries.

4.3.1. Localizing risks

To achieve the vision of future-proof (desirable) districts, an area-oriented approach is adopted. The goal is to make districts "future-proof", characterized as "safe, healthy,

pleasant, and attractive for both current and new residents” (Gemeenteraad, 2021, p. 104). Accordingly, this approach requires interventions in vulnerable districts as, for example, asserted in the Safety Program: “vulnerable districts can count on a targeted approach for increased safety” (Directie Veiligheid, 2018, p. 40). *Vulnerable Districts* are “district that are just short of being a focus district according to the District Profile Scores” (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021, p. 63), and “where criminality and nuisance cause problems” (Directie Veiligheid, 2018, p.7). *Focus Districts* are the districts with the lowest Safety Index scores, (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022a). These districts are identified as objects of governance:

We want the Safety Index in every district in Rotterdam to be the same or higher than it is now at the end of this administrative period. In the districts that currently score low we aim for an increase of at least 5 points compared to 2022. (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022a, p.8)

In districts identified as “at-risk”, techniques like deploying city marines, investigating officers (*BOAs*), enforcement teams, police presence and controls, and square stewards in public spaces are intensified. For example, “in the most vulnerable districts, we use intensive and integrated approaches and deploy city marines, among others” (Directie Veiligheid, 2018, p.39). The government of safety also utilizes instruments like cameras and mosquito devices. Mosquitos emit a high-pitched buzzing audible only to young people (up to 25 years old), deployed in areas where residents are bothered by loitering youth during night-time (Aboutaleb, 2021). The mosquitos are employed in areas where the nuisance is experienced frequently. Cameras are employed to prevent serious disruptions of public order,

particularly in cases where “less invasive measures such as mosquito devices” have proven ineffective (Aboutaleb, 2021).

Seemingly, the notion of “nuisance” (*overlast*) appears frequently in the approach to safety. It is also an indicator of the Safety Index, where *objective nuisance* is measured through reports of drugs use or trade, conflicts within public space, and disruptive behaviours and *subjective nuisance* is measured through the ways residents experience nuisance in their district (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022c). However, this conceptualization nuisance lacks a clear linguistic signifier or tangible referent throughout the analysed documents. To explain, in the Safety Index, nuisance seems to merely reflect an emotional aspect of perception and identification as people can experience disturbances in multiple and various way. “Nuisance”, in that sense, acts as a repository where diverse issues can be grouped together, allowing them to be associated with the concept of risk. This hints towards a sense of unease or discomfort with the presence of individuals who are perceived as different or unfamiliar.

A closer inspection of the Local General Bylaw (APV) allowed for a more concrete manifestation of nuisance, often expressed in congruence with "disruptions of public order." Various actions and behaviours, such as bargaining, consuming alcohol, fighting, sleeping, public gathering, using drugs, displaying "disturbing" behaviour, or harassing others, are discursively constructed as indicators of nuisance in public spaces. Moreover, attempts are made to justify how nuisance is constructed, as for instance exemplified when discussing public gathering bans as a disruption of public order: “By “gathering”, Van Dale understands “the gathering together in groups of people who have threatening attitudes or evil intentions.”” (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2012, p. 109). However, while some indicators of nuisance are concrete and tangible, such as sleeping on public benches, they do not explain how and why it is translated into the operationalization of risk, assuming a *normative moral*

order. Similarly, what “threatening attitudes or evil intentions” look like remains unspecified and appears rather subjective.

In this way, the conceptual vagueness of nuisance becomes a tool for interpreting and framing diverse phenomena as potential indicators of risk. Through the objectification of space, safety risks are spatially identified and managed, allowing certain individuals to be localized in space as a safety risk, becoming an object of governance. Consequently, this allows for targeting specific groups based on their mere presence rather than specific behaviours. By ascribing a pre-significance of risk to actions, situations, or objects that may lack concrete substance, they are transformed into problematic issues. In other words, the practice of labelling neighbourhoods as "problematic" serves as a means of producing knowledge about the population, while also reinforcing certain norms and values.

4.3.2. Identifying objects of risk

Ultimately, the police and municipal enforcers are responsible for enforcing the APV (Burgemeester en Wethouder van Rotterdam, 2019), thus gaining authority in evaluating nuisance and disruptions of public order. Consequently, through their performance, objects of risk are “brought to life”. Arguably, intensified enforcement and surveillance in specific areas is inseparably linked to the (re)production of an existing culturally normative moral order. This becomes evident when looking at the population composition of districts classified as focus/vulnerable. These districts, like Carnisse, Tussendijken, Tarwewijk, Hillesluis, and Lombardijen, are often coincided with lower property values, rental housing, a higher proportion of “newcomers” (i.e., non-western ethnic minorities who have been less than two years in the Netherlands), and low-income households (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022c). Moreover, the distribution of police officers is allocated based on a distribution system that “considers environmental characteristics of an area, because these are objective features that

best predict police workloads” (Aboutaleb, 2023, p. 2), including the number of non-western “allochtonen” and low-income families in an area (Aboutaleb, 2023). This implies a higher police presence within areas composed of a pre-dominantly marginalized ethnic community and low-income groups, and as such subjecting these groups to intensified enforcement, deterring these populations from engaging in “deviant” behaviours. Brought about by the spatial localization of safety risks, a subpopulation defined by risk is spatially identified and governed, predominantly consisting of an ethnic, lower-income population. In that sense, individuals sharing the visible physical and cultural attributes of the problematized population are automatically deemed suspicious and risky, regardless of concrete unlawful behaviours. On the opposing side of the moral spectrum, then, there is the “law-abiding community”, portrayed as being threatened by this perceived deviancy.

Consequently, through the policing of “incivility”, groups that deviate too much from perceived norms find themselves unwelcome in public spaces. For example, ethnic minority groups are excluded in public spaces through imposed public gathering bans, district bans, or the deployment of mosquitos, under the guise of nuisance of “loitering youth”. Also, “improper” use of street furniture and public space results in the fining of homeless people under the guise of nuisance. Accordingly, the publicness of public space becomes more limited as extensive forms of control are implemented, concerning administrative policies, tactics, and strategies to regulate populations. Arguably, the moral representations of exemplary and engaged citizens contrasted with perceived risky citizens that are constructed through these techniques and discursive practices illuminate the way in which citizenship operates as a means of differentiation. Citizenship expands beyond its formal definition, but rather encompasses moral citizenship, representing a normative conception of the ideal citizen.

4.4. Making space for a desirable Rotterdam

Through the extensive disciplining and “civilizing” a select group of people, space is made for gentrification. Namely, only districts categorized as risky are targeted by the municipality for management of spatial restructuring. It is in these districts where “problems accumulate” that attempts are made to “seize opportunities”. Realising this potential often entails urban renewal projects: “In these focus neighbourhoods, an approach is needed to achieve major housing improvement and sustainability through renovation, modernisation, transformation or replacement” (Gemeenteraad, 2021, p. 105). In practice, this entails the demolishing of social housing and the upgrading of property values, pushing out lower-income, ethnic minority residents and attracting more affluent groups (Uitermark & Duyvendack, 2008).

Moreover, investments in public spaces, like “refurbished squares and streets in city neighbourhoods and garden cities”, are made to enhance a strong economy and an attractive residential city, since public space is “the business card of the city” (Gemeente Rotterdam Stadsontwikkeling, 2021, p.6). These investments aim to stimulate Rotterdam’s vision of “good growth” (Gemeenteraad, 2021), in which “the economic importance of an attractive accessible city centre for the city and the region is high” (Gemeente Rotterdam Stadsontwikkeling, 2021, p. 51). As also specifically referred to in the vision for urban public space, enhancing settlement value (*vestigingswaarde*) of urban space functions as a significant guidance for urban planning, as this is an important aspect for its economic growth, development, and competitiveness. These choices align with the broader neoliberal urban agenda of growth, competition, and commodification.

5. Conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction, safety occupies a prominent place within Rotterdam's approach for governing. This study has explored the manifestation of the government of safety in Rotterdam's urban public spaces and its implications for the publicness of these spaces and citizenship. The analysis of 12 policy documents that materialize the government of safety has shed light on the approach, ambitions, and action points related to safety and urban space. In this context, the following question was raised: *How does the government of safety articulate the publicness of public urban space and citizenship in Rotterdam?* This final chapter will conclude the study by summarizing the key findings, answering the research questions, discussing the limitations, and providing suggestions for future research.

Firstly, the results of this project focused on identifying the way urban public space is approached within the government of safety in Rotterdam. The findings reveal a critical tension between the professed vision of inclusive and collaboratively constructed urban public spaces and the actual realization of these ideals within the discourses surrounding public space governance in Rotterdam. The discursive construction of an inclusive public space is closely intertwined with the notion of safety, as safety programs and assessments play a central role in shaping the city's future trajectory. Consequently, the government of safety assumes a strategic position in shaping the city's image and influencing urban planning decisions, thereby exerting control over the nature and accessibility of public spaces.

Central to this articulation is the emphasis on safety as a prerequisite for desirable public urban spaces. This emphasis creates a framework that justifies interventions and enables the government of safety to exercise control over urban development, shaping the

future trajectory of public spaces. Public space is thus discursively treated as an object of governance, with safety assuming a determining role in its shaping.

Furthermore, the tangible manifestations of space were examined. The analysis of techniques of safety in Rotterdam reveals a complex interplay between the construction of risk, the localization of risks in specific districts, and the identification of objects of risk. These techniques, under the guise of ensuring safety and future-proofing districts, contribute to the reproduction of a culturally normative moral order. The policing of "incivility" and the exclusion of certain groups from public spaces through safety techniques reinforce a dichotomy between the "law-abiding community" and perceived deviant individuals or groups.

These discursive practices of safety also serve a neoliberal urban agenda, particularly through gentrification. Districts categorized as risky become targets for spatial restructuring, often involving the demolition of social housing and the upgrading of property values. Consequently, these changes can displace lower-income, ethnic minority residents and attract more affluent groups. By facilitating spaces that cater to affluent residents, who represent capital, the aim is to achieve a "governing" effect of risk management. This entire dynamic unfolds within the broader framework of risk management and population management through risk, i.e., governmentality.

Altogether, these spatially oriented interventions aimed at maintaining order and safety in congruence with processes of gentrification limit the publicness of urban public space. The construction of risk and the governance of objects of risk contribute to the marginalization and stigmatization of ethnic minority groups, thereby restricting their access to and participation in public spaces. By positioning homeownership, intensification, and private redevelopment as necessary for enhancing safety, the interests of middle-class

populations are materialised in public space, while pushing out less affluent classes. Folded into the act of categorising persons and their public existence in public space as “unsafe” are assumptions, imaginations, and conditions for what it means to be a legitimate citizen, navigating freely through public space.

5.1. Methodological limitations and recommendations for future research

It is important to acknowledge that, due to the ambitious nature of CDA, the data analysis conducted may not be as rigorous and exhaustive as that of a more experienced researcher. A researcher well-versed in the tools and procedures of CDA would likely yield a more comprehensive analysis, potentially uncovering additional relevant themes and patterns.

Furthermore, given the extensive nature of theories pertaining to citizenship, public space, and urban space, it was not feasible to address all dynamics and implications of the government of safety within the scope of this research project. Additionally, the selection of data could have been more comprehensive to provide a richer explanation and examination of the government of safety. This could involve incorporating documents from other governmental and institutional bodies, such as the police, as well as including documents that outline the specific methods employed to construct the District Profile, further illuminating the specific rationality employed in the government of safety.

An interesting area of investigation lies in conducting interviews with spatially marginalized groups, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of their experiences and perspectives regarding their access to public spaces and the influence of safety strategies on their sense of belonging and citizenship. Such interviews have the potential to unveil the ways in which certain groups resist the prescribed trajectory of public space, asserting their right to the city. Exploring their acts of resistance and their endeavours to reclaim public

space can uncover the creative ways in which marginalized communities navigate and contest the government's vision of urban space. This examination of resistance movements can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the power dynamics at play within the government of safety and provide insights into the potential for transformative change.

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Appendix A. Overview of Collected Data

Text	Type of text	Author	Year
Veilig@Rotterdam: Veiligheidsprogramma 2018- 2023	5-years Safety Program	Directie Veiligheid	2018
Algemene plaatselijke verordening Rotterdam 2012	General Local By- Laws (APV)	Gemeente Rotterdam	2012
Visie Openbare Ruimte Rotterdam 2020-2030: Een gezond en groen Rotterdam voor iedereen	Vision document 10- years public space	Gemeente Rotterdam Stadsontwikkeling	2020
Evaluatie Slimme Mosquito	Letter to the city council; evaluation	Ahmed Aboutaleb	2021
Tussenbalans Veilig&Rotterdam 2018-2023	Letter to the city council; evaluation	Burgemeester en Wethouders van Rotterdam	2021
Het Wijkprofiel: Inkijk in stad en wijk 2022	Neighbourhood profile: biennial midterm review	Gemeente Rotterdam	2022
Coalitieakkoord 2022-2016: Een stad. Rotterdam	Coalition agreement	Gemeente Rotterdam	2022
De Veranderstad. Werken aan een wereldstad voor iedereen. Omgevingsvisie Rotterdam.	Environment vision	Gemeenteraad	2021
Uitleg Wijkprofiel, Rotterdam	Webpage District Profile	Gemeente Rotterdam	2022
Begroting 2022 en Tweede Herziening 2021	Annual report 2021	Gemeente Rotterdam	2021

Start inzet pleinstewards	Letter to city council	Burgemeester en Wethouders van Rotterdam	2023
Honderden agenten te veel in Rotterdam	Letter to city council	Burgemeester en Wethouders van Rotterdam	2023
Beantwoording van de schriftelijke vragen van de raadsleden N. Arsieni (D66), E.S. Walgenbach (D66) en V.P.G. Karremans (WD) over overbodige verboden.	Letter to city council	Burgemeester en Wethouders van Rotterdam	2019

Appendix B. Atlas.ti Screenshots of Coding Process

Figure 4.

Coding round 1: Open coding

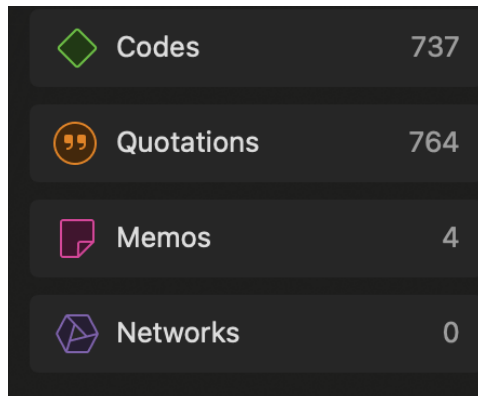
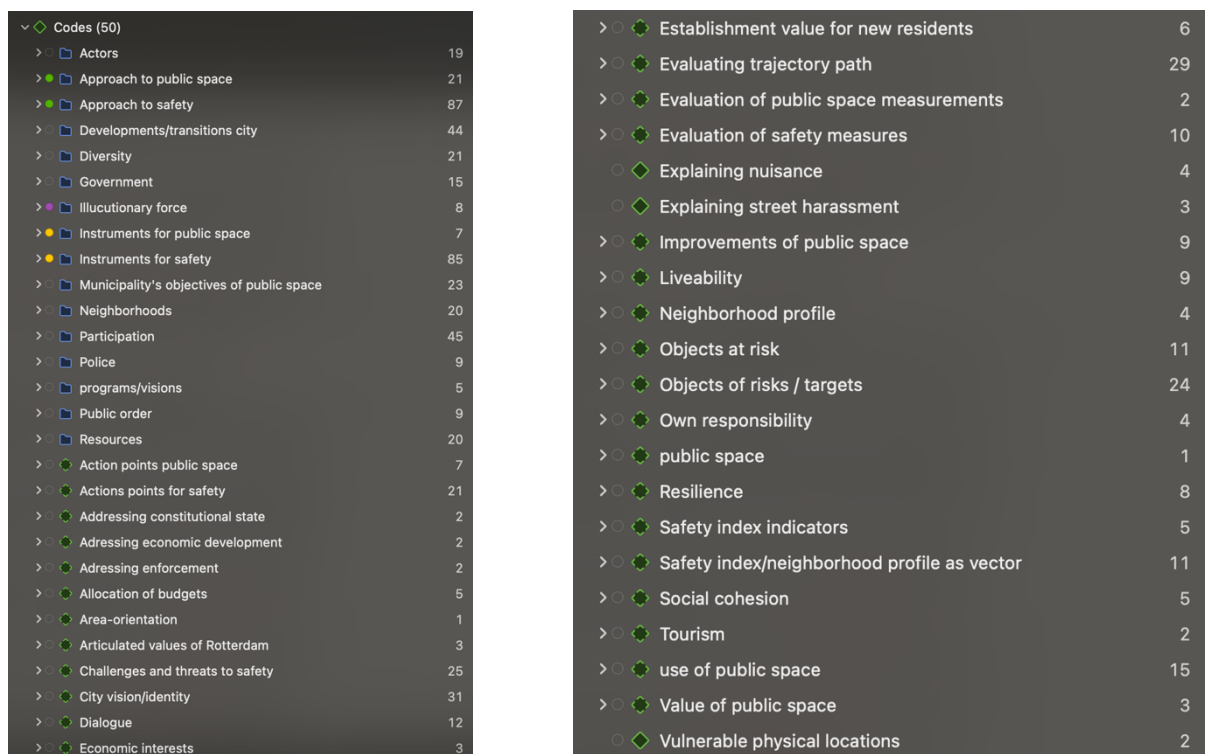


Figure 5.

Coding round 2: Axial coding



Appendix C. Privacy and Ethical Considerations Checklist



CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Bonnie French, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: From Rhetoric to Reality: The Publicness of Urban Space in Rotterdam through the Government of Safety

Name, email of student: Fenna Nijboer, 506215fn@eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Willem Schinkel, schinkel@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: 6th of April

Is the research study conducted within DPAS YES

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. NO

If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? NO

Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? YES - NO
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? YES - NO
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? YES - NO
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? YES - NO
Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? YES - NO
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? YES - NO
7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? YES - NO
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? YES - NO
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? YES - NO
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? YES - NO

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

The data that I collect is derived from openly accessible pre-existing public documents on the Internet. These documents are attainable via the following websites:

- www.rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl
- www.watdoetdegemeente.rotterdam.nl
- www.wijkprofiel.rotterdam.nl
- www.open.overheid.nl
- www.openrotterdam.nl
- www.ruimtelijkeplannen.nl

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

1w text-documents

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

Not applicable

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

The digital documents I am using will be downloaded to my iCloud storage as PDF's on my personal laptop and will be uploaded to my personal account in Zotero. My Zotero account is not open to other users and only accessible to me. I will also save a copy of each data file as a local copy on my laptop. All documents will be/are downloaded between the 15th of March and 26th of June.

For each digital data file, I will note when I downloaded the document from the Internet, from which website URL I derived the document from, who or which organization is the author and publisher of the document, and the date when the document was published online. These details will be annotated in a separate Word-file.

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

I am responsible for the storage, backup, and day-to-day management of the data.

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

I will make use of an automated service to create regular backups. My laptop is equipped with backup software, which is called Time Machine. Time Machine makes hourly backups for past 24 hours, daily backups for the past month, and weekly backups for all previous months.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

Not applicable

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student:

Fenna Nijboer

Date:

25/06/23

Name (EUR) supervisor:

Date: